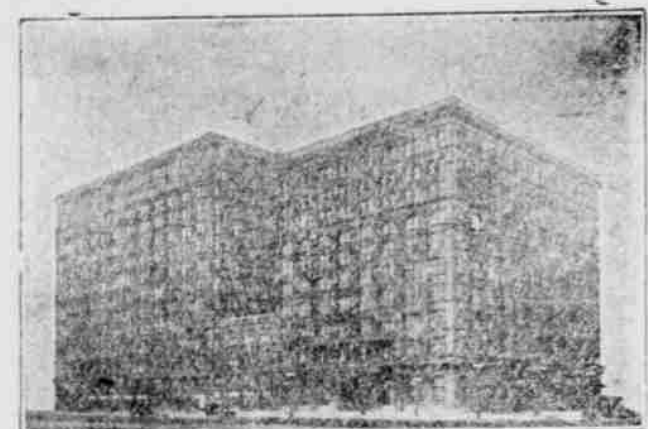


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PRAGUE CITY OF PALACES

United States Minister Crane Lives in One of Them, Which He, Himself, Purchased.

Prague, capital of Czechoslovakia, is pre-eminently a city of palaces. As soon as one has crossed the Moldava by the old Charles bridge—the quaintest, most picturesque bridge in the world, with its gates flanked with towers and its group of beautiful statues adorning the parapet—one finds one's self in a quarter of the city entirely given to palaces, where in narrow old streets, crooked and grass grown, and about tranquil, silent squares rise the splendid facades of seigniorial dwellings.

When, following the signing of the peace, England, America, France and Italy were looking for quarters for their diplomatic representatives, these palaces were just what was needed for housing the legations. Raymond Recouly writes in Scribner's, France took over the palace belonging to the Buquoy's, a Flemish family which came to Bohemia after the battle of La Montagne Blanche and cast in their fortunes with those of the Hapsburgs.

The United States minister, Mr. Crane, has bought with his own money the magnificent palace of the Schonborn. The chateau is less beautiful, less elegant, perhaps, than the Buquoy palace, but the gardens are marvelous. They rise in terrace after terrace to a hill which overlooks the entire city. At the top are the tennis courts, where the diplomatic circle meets daily for afternoon tea.

The most striking original feature of Prague is the "Hradchany," an acropolis of towers, churches and palaces dominating the capital. From the time that Prague was reduced to a city of secondary importance the palaces of the "Hradchany" were practically abandoned. Now and then some archduke in disgrace, some prince in exile, would establish himself in one or another of them for a time. The ex-Emperor Charles, while a student at the University of Prague, an archduke with apparently no chance of ever coming to the throne, lived there.

All these palaces, once abandoned, deserted, are today occupied by the president of the republic and the different ministers. President Masaryk received me in that same sumptuous drawing room which had once been the salon of the Emperor Charles.

Nature's Jewel Boxes.

The northwestern part of Uruguay is a newly discovered field for the production of amethysts, which occur in "geodes." The geodes, so plentiful that they are picked up in the fields, are carried on muleback or in carts to the nearest railway station and shipped in barrels to Salto, whence they are transported by river boat to Montevideo.

Naturally it will be asked, "what is a geode?" Originally, it was a hole in a rock. Water percolating through the rock deposited silica, making a lining for the cavity. The lining grew thicker and thicker, and after a long time if the rock were broken or "weathered" to pieces, a hard nodule would drop out. The nodule is a geode; and if, as sometimes happens, the silica has formed crystals inside of it, colored by metallic salts, the geode is a little jewel box containing amethysts.

A beautiful statuette, eight inches high, of a woman dancing, has recently been placed in the Morgan Gem hall of the American Museum of Natural History in New York city. It is carved out of a perfect block of translucent sapphire, blue quartz, from Uruguay.

Checkers Played by Nile.

Checkers is one of the oldest games played today. Sixteen hundred years before Christ was born the Egyptians were playing a game along the Nile that was essentially our game of checkers or draughts, as the British prefer to call it. The ancient Greeks had the game with but slight variations, and through all the intervening centuries it has interested and entertained people. Some now prefer chess, another very old game, claiming that there is more mental work involved; but the game of checkers, simple as it is, presents a demand for the use of mental powers quite equal to those of the average person.

That the rules of the game have become very well established is indicated by the fact that Joshua Sturges' "Guide to the Game of Draughts," which was first published in 1800, is still the standard authority on all points of dispute in the game of checkers as played today.

Inventions Suggested by Nature.

The ram of the modern men-of-war is the device of the swordfish of the Indo-Pacific ocean. Its upper jaw has a long beak or ram, by means of which it can pierce not only fish, but the sides of timber-built ships. Even the plants have forestalled human inventions. Nearly everybody, perhaps, has wondered why the stems of nearly all plants and the trunks and branches of trees are round instead of any other shape. The existence of tall plants and trees depend largely on the wind force. And a tree with a square trunk and branches would offer so much resistance to the wind that it would be continually having its branches snapped. It is for the same reason that engineers build tall chimneys and piers for bridges round in section in preference to any other form.

Cloud Shadows on the Moor.

Cloud shadows sweep over the moor with wings that are gray or nearly black, blue or violet-purple, according to the seasons and quality of air and sunshine. On stormy days the case is altered and out of the gloom there break beams to fly over the darkness of earth, like golden birds. The shadow and shaft of light both serve to bring out detail in the wilderness; and while today passages of shade reveal the integument of heath and stone, or fling up the outline of a hill among others lost in light, tomorrow a sun-flash is apter to do these things and paint pictures set in cloudy frames.—From "A Shadow Passes," by Eden Phillpotts.

LAND OF CHANGES

Santo Domingo Has Undergone Many Vicissitudes.

Oldest Permanent Settlement on American Soil, It Has Failed to Fulfill Its Early Promise.

Santo Domingo is rich in historic interest, says Samuel Guy Inman in the course of an article in the Pan-American Magazine. It is the oldest of all of the permanent settlements on American soil. Here Columbus founded various colonies, and Santo Domingo city became his favorite of all the New world. It was here that he spent some of the happiest time of his life, and here that he was reduced to prison by his political enemies and from here he was sent in chains and disgrace to Spain. The old tower where he was imprisoned still remains and his bones lie in the great cathedral of Santo Domingo City.

In this oldest city of the New world one still sees the remains of the first church built in America. Its foundations were laid in 1502. Here is the house where Cortez kept the court records before he had ever heard of Mexico. From here Ponce de Leon set out in his search for the Fountain of Youth. Here lived Pizarro before he went to Panama and sailed down the west coast to conquer the Inca empire. Everywhere one turns he encounters old landmarks where the famous conquistadores had their first experiences in the New world. Padre de las Casas entered the priesthood here, and in his indignation because of the abuse of the Indians by the Spaniards began to import slaves from Africa to make lighter the work of the Indian laborers. Here was founded the first university of the New world, when in 1538 a royal charter was granted for the establishment of the University of St. Thomas.

Unfortunately this glorious history was not maintained. Fifty years after the first settlement the Indians had almost been exterminated by the cruelty of their masters and the finest of the conquistadores had moved on to conquer new and glorious worlds. For nearly three centuries Santo Domingo dropped out of the notice of the world. In the early part of the Nineteenth century, when the other Spanish colonies were declaring their independence and establishing republics, Santo Domingo endeavored to join this movement, but she was overpowered by the negro despot of Hayti, and was held under the dominance of the negro republic until 1844. Then followed twenty years of independent life, filled with revolution, after which the country again put itself under Spain for some five years. Again declaring itself as a republic, it entered an independent existence until 1916, when the government was taken over by the United States navy.

Island Cities in Europe.

There are four cities in Europe which stand wholly or in part on islands. Ghent, in Belgium, is built on 26 islands, which are connected by 80 bridges, the city having as many canals as streets. Amsterdam, in Holland, a city of ten miles in circumference, is mostly built on piles driven into the sandy soil, but the flowing of the tide and the debris of the Amsel river have made 90 islands, and the city has more canals than streets. The waterways are traversed by over 300 bridges, so that Amsterdam has earned the designation of the Venice of the North. Venice is built on 80 islands, great and small, which are connected by 400 bridges. There is not a carriage in the city, although footways are abundant, and it is possible to go from one end of the city to the other on foot, though sometimes long detours must necessarily be made. Petrograd is built on a peninsula and two islands connected by several large stone bridges, and in summer numerous bridges of boats, which, however, are removed at the first frost.

Southern Cypress Has Many Colors.

Southern bald cypress is about the most variable in color of any of our native woods, and in different localities is known as red cypress, yellow cypress, white cypress and black cypress.

There is a rather prevalent belief that cypress with dark colored heartwood is the most durable, but the opinion of the United States forest products laboratory is that as far as durability is concerned the color of the wood makes very little difference.

In service records obtained by the laboratory, any difference in the length of service of red cypress and yellow cypress appears to be due entirely to a difference in the amount of sapwood in the timbers. Cypress trees with light-colored heartwood usually have more sapwood than those with dark colored heartwood, and sapwood is not resistant to decay.

The important thing, if durability is desired, appears to be to select the heartwood of cypress regardless of its shade.

Majority and Plurality.

The candidate, who among several, receives the highest number of votes, is said to have a plurality amounting to the difference between his vote and that of the candidate receiving the next highest number. If the vote of the candidate is greater than the sum of the votes cast for all other candidates for the same office he has a majority. A majority is more than half, while a plurality may be much less than half.

Gloves in History.

Gloves were so thoroughly recognized as emblems of trust and honor in former times that they were sent as pledges of safe conduct in times of truce. The one slain on this custom was that the queen-dowager of Navarre was persuaded to go to Paris to attend the marriage of the king of Navarre, by the embassy of a pair of gloves, and, unhappily, on the morning of the ceremony, met her death by means of poisoned gloves.

STRIVE TO BECOME "ARTIST"

Not Necessary to Paint Pictures, but to Do One's Work With Skill and Finish.

When we say an artist, we are apt to think only of the one who is able to paint a picture. We should have a clearer conception of what the word artist really means. It is one who does his work with skill and finish. Most cooks can make passably good bread; only the artist offers that which delights, feeds and satisfies.

It is easy enough, though one be not a marksman, to hit a barn door with a shotgun. The artist hits the bull's eye with a rifle.

An elevator boy can stop his car within six inches of the floor level, and then jerk it into place. The artist finds the exact point the first and every time.

The pettifogger hangs around the streets and loafing places of the town looking for business, waiting for some one to have a falling out, or trouble somewhere. The artist goes among strangers, rents a room on the tenth floor, goes to work and the people come up to him. If he takes a vacation they wait until he gets back or go to the woods after him.

The minister who neglects his preparation through the week, on Sunday is greeted with empty pews, finds fault with the few faithful ones who do come. The artist is a student every week, gives his people a message full of thought and inspiration. His church is crowded.

What high quality of manhood does it require to fly into a fit of passion when something goes wrong, and to rage round like a madman.

The artist holds himself in leash, pitches his tones low and smiles on through the day's work.

The mother, housewife, or woman with money and time can have pretty clothes, leisure for rest, or society. It is the artist who, on limited means, can dress decently, operate the household without friction, be happy and have those about her happy. It really is as easy to be an artist in your line as a bungler—easier, once it is learned. It is a good deal more satisfactory, and pays a lot better.—Thrifty Magazine.

New Day for Army Wife.

The lot of the army wife is a hard one and unless it is made easier the army system cannot endure, said Brig. Gen. Clarence R. Edwards.

"These wives and daughters of soldiers," he said, "have patted their husbands and fathers on the back and sent them to war without a murmur. They have followed the flag from one place to another, patched and schemed, frozen on one side and roasted on the other from garrison stoves, put up with all sorts of hardships, and never found fault.

"But things are a little different now. They each have a vote and they can reach this system through their representatives in congress. If cantonnments are not made at least comfortable for women of the army, it is my opinion that the system cannot endure."

When to Leave People Alone.

It's a mark of generalship to know where the other fellow is touchy. It is an evidence of mastery to be able to keep hands off when you have such fine opportunities for prodding him up a bit. It's human nature to "put it to a fellow" when you have the chance. You argue he would do it to you if he could. Yet what's the gain in such conduct? Any one can do the mean petty things that ruin peace and disrupt routine. The world has thousands in it who are feeling themselves the continual butt of ridicule. Everything that is done seems to be a direct attack on their conduct. They are constantly miserable and seeking for some one to tell their troubles to. They are mad at themselves most of the time. The wise man lets them alone even when he has a chance to even up some of their pettiness.—Grit.

Relics of Famed Irishman.

Hanging in the great hallway of the present mansion of Sir Robert Hodson, Hollybrook, Ireland, where Robin Adair lived, played, sang verses, is his harp. Robin Adair was a successful wine merchant in Dublin. He it was who built Hollybrook, where he entertained lavishly. The original song of "Robin Adair," which dates back to the year 1730, was written to commemorate a visit he paid to some sporting friends at Puckstown, near Dublin. In spite of his convivial habits, Robin Adair lived to a green old age, and died in Dublin, 1737. In addition to his harp, two of his wine glasses, which held a quart of wine each, are still preserved in this same mansion.

Diagnosis.

"I hear that Tawkins is going to give De Smart a pretty fat fee."

"What for?"

"Because when the doc was called to attend Mrs. Tawkins for a slight nervous trouble he told her she had an acute attack of inflammatory verbosity. He then recommended absolute quiet as the only means of averting cacathous loquendi. She's scared dumb."

His Opinion.

"Our new cook formerly worked in an ammunition factory. What do you think of her?"

"I think she manufactures a very fair grade of ammunition," said Mr. Wampus, as he put down a biscuit carefully.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Recognizing the Inevitable.

"The landlord says we will have to pay more rent."

"Did you give him an argument?" "Certainly not. What's the use of wasting time in conversation that might be devoted to hustling for the needful cash?"

A Bit of Scenery.

"I understand there is an old moon-shine still in your place." "Yes," replied Farmer Cornstossel. "Tourists come for miles to see it. It makes more money as an exhibition than it ever made operating as a distillery."

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